

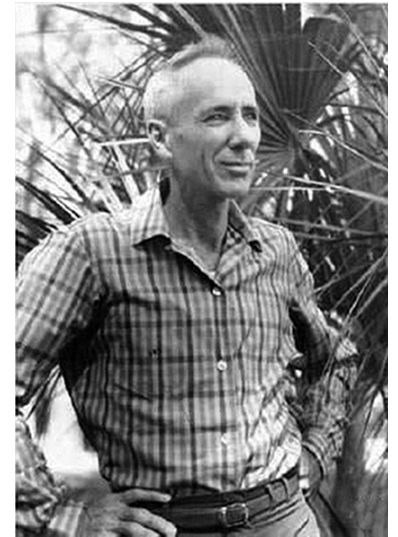
Chapter Eighteen

Archie Carr: In Praise of Wild Florida

In early March of 1987, I was contacted by Gainesville cardiologist Mark Barrow with an urgent request to meet with him at the Micanopy home of Dr. Archie Carr, Florida's most prolific nature writer, and one of the world's experts on sea turtles. Carr was dying of cancer and would only live two more weeks. Barrow had lent me an antique postcard of the Suwannee from his massive collection for use in my first film. He was also on the board of Florida Defenders of the Environment, founded by Carr's wife, Marjorie Harris Carr. FDE had successfully fought the completion of the Cross Florida Barge Canal, which was officially de-authorized in 1971. I had met the tenacious Mrs. Carr a few times during production of the Suwannee film, but I only knew of Archie through his reputation and the legendary stories shared by his accomplished students.

The strongest, most visual memory of my only meeting with Dr. Carr was that he looked out from his bed covers like a stranded turtle. His hollow cheeks somehow accentuated his beak-like nose, and he looked up at me with all the wisdom and melancholy of a hawksbill in sight of its nesting ground. As if to underscore the profundity of our meeting, Carr said something to the effect, "I'll be sorry to see me go." There may have been a chuckle in the room. To read Carr is to encounter his wry sense of humor. It would take me some time to arrive at a fuller understanding of his comment. Carr had dedicated his life to the endangered sea turtle, reptiles, and other keystone species. The tone of his writings could shift in a sentence between a sense of childlike awe at the wonderments of the natural world, and the sobering reality of a world on the cusp of environmental disaster. Science at UF was following the worldwide tendency to see the world at the micro-level. Carr was one of the last ecologists at UF to approach science from a holistic perspective. As a young scientist, Carr had chosen to live and conduct his research in Florida because of its species diversity. Now he was seeing his Eden disappear. I came to the understanding that Carr saw himself as an endangered species and, thus, was sorry to see himself go.

Archie made one additional, significant request should we produce a documentary on his life and work. His landmark research on the navigational abilities of sea turtles had been featured in films by *National Geographic* and elsewhere. But his great and abiding love was for Florida and he had always hoped to bring his writings about the state together in a single book. I think he must have thought of this proposed film project as his *Walden* or *Sand County Almanac*. It was his desire that a Carr documentary feature excerpts from the many essays, articles, and columns he had written about virtually every major ecosystem and species across the full breadth of the Florida peninsula.



Archie Carr

Soon after Carr's passing, Marjorie invited me back to their home in Micanopy to discuss the film project. She walked me to a small desk in a room overlooking a backyard pond and took several small notebooks out of the drawer. They were notes Carr had made while observing the natural wonders on their small farmstead. I would soon learn that many of these jottings became the subject of his column "Lifelines," published regularly in *Animal Kingdom*, a periodical of the New York Zoological Society. His files contained manuscripts for numerous articles about Florida published in *Audubon Magazine*, *National Geographic*, and other widely read periodicals. He had also written the *Time-Life* book on the Everglades. It would take time to locate Carr's prolific writings on Florida.

Our discussion then turned to the issues of funding. As head of Florida Defenders of the Environment, Marjorie had access to a large mailing list of FDE supporters and sent me off charged with writing up a letter of support she would personally sign and mail. Before I had a chance to work up the letter, I got a call from Marjorie asking to see me and to bring the list of names she had provided. She explained that she was dependent on many of these loyal and generous donors to support FDE's ongoing efforts to remove the Rodman Dam on the Ocklawaha River, an artifact of the de-authorized Barge Canal, thus allowing the river to once again run free. She began crossing off names from the list, lots of names, most of the names.

But Marjorie had a Plan B. In 1956, when her husband was a young scientist at UF, Archie Carr published what soon became one of the most renowned books on the subject of sea turtle navigation, *The Windward Road: Adventures of a Naturalist on Remote Caribbean Shores*. The book came to the attention of newspaperman Joshua B. Powers, who was so impressed by Carr's writing and research that he helped found The Brotherhood of the Green Turtle. Powers was soon joined by John H. (Benjamin) Phipps, heir to a family fortune and owner of radio and television stations throughout the South. They pledged to financially support Carr's work for the rest of his career and made good on the promise. The Brotherhood would soon be named the Caribbean Conservation Corps, a title more befitting mention on scholarly publications.

Marjorie's suggestion was that I travel to Manhattan with my film partner, Bill Suchy, to the annual meeting of the Brotherhood at the posh Metropolitan Club, a "gentleman's club" founded in 1891 by J. P. Morgan. It would be a roomful of deep-pocketed devotees, and surely they would respond generously to help produce a Carr documentary. The meeting was imminent, so Bill and I had to ante up the bucks for new suits—this was a millionaire's club—and plane tickets. I recall that Bill and I were given no formal introduction at the gathering, no wheels had been greased or point persons assigned. We were ducks in new suits and out of the water. This would not be the last time I was sent on a fool's errand only to learn that the reason some folks have lots of money is that they hold on to it with a frugal fist. We didn't raise a single dollar at the millionaire's club. My only other memory was that the actor Cliff Robertson was the guest of honor. He was serving as the celebrity poster boy for sea turtle conservation. Robertson had been a handsome presence on the screen as the young and heroic John F. Kennedy in the film *PT-109*. In person, he was a short guy with a very bad wig.

Plan B having been a costly failure, I repeated the formula I had successfully employed in the "Upward Years" films series. I trudged back to the Santa Fe Endowment trough with the proposal that the college sponsor a celebration honoring one of Gainesville's favorite sons. I began a search for possible interview subjects who shared some close tie with Carr. While perusing Carr's bookshelf, I came across an autographed copy of the 1975 novel, *Turtle Diary*, by Russell Hoban. Hoban was an expatriate from Chicago living in London and widely known for childrens' books he co-authored with his wife featuring a young girl named Francis. I had not read Hoban, but I had recently seen the film adaptation of *Turtle Diary*, starring Glenda Jackson and Ben Kingsley. Holding his book

in hand, I recalled a scene in a London bookstore where Kingsley's character, William, is employed. Jackson's character, Neaera, enters and is checking out books on sea turtles when William asks, "Have you read Carr?" I looked down at Hoban's autograph and felt as if some circle had been completed. Adding to the synchronicity, my second choice was writer and naturalist Peter Matthiessen, whose poetic novel, *Far Tortuga*, was also published in 1975, and, I strongly suspected, had also been influenced by Carr's *Windward Road*. I immediately sent letters of invitations to the authors, knowing the enormity of the ask, and never doubting they would give the matter serious consideration.

Russell Hoban

Hoban responded to our query with a generous and fascinating letter typed on his favored A4 yellow bond paper. The yellow bond has made cameo appearances in his writings beginning with the novel *Kleinzeit*. The official Russell Hoban website features "The Yellow Paper Forum," an ever-expanding list of essays, articles, and myriad observations contributed in honor of Hoban's memory. I have provided a photocopy of Hoban's reply on yellow bond below, as it is too rich in detail to reduce to selected quotes. Hoban cites diary entries revealing the germination of what would become the novel *Turtle Diary*. When I was researching for a documentary on contemporary American nature and environmental writers, I asked a number of noted authors about their use of the journal and diary as part of the writing process. Hoban's entries, and his letters to Dr. Carr, Bill Suchy, and me, seem an invaluable resource to Hoban readers and scholars, as they trace the progression of seemingly random observations, and an eclectic reading list, towards the shaping of a great literary work.



Russell Hoban.

Hoban also sent us copies of his correspondence with Carr, thus confirming the influence Carr's writings had on the creation of *Turtle Diary*. In a letter dated May 22, 1973, Hoban tells Carr he had observed "a male and female loggerhead, twenty to thirty years old, weighing over 200 pounds." He even references Ron Dumbleton, the keeper at the Aquarium, who, like his fictional counterpart in the novel and film, suggests the need to liberate the turtles. Carr replied in his June 13 letter: "I grieve for the three big London Zoo Aquarium sea turtles; but any pen-reared turtle becomes a pathetic problem, if it grows to a size that embarrasses his keeper." Carr tells Hoban he regrets he cannot accept the London Zoo turtles, but he would be happy to send the zoo some small turtles should the larger ones be liberated.

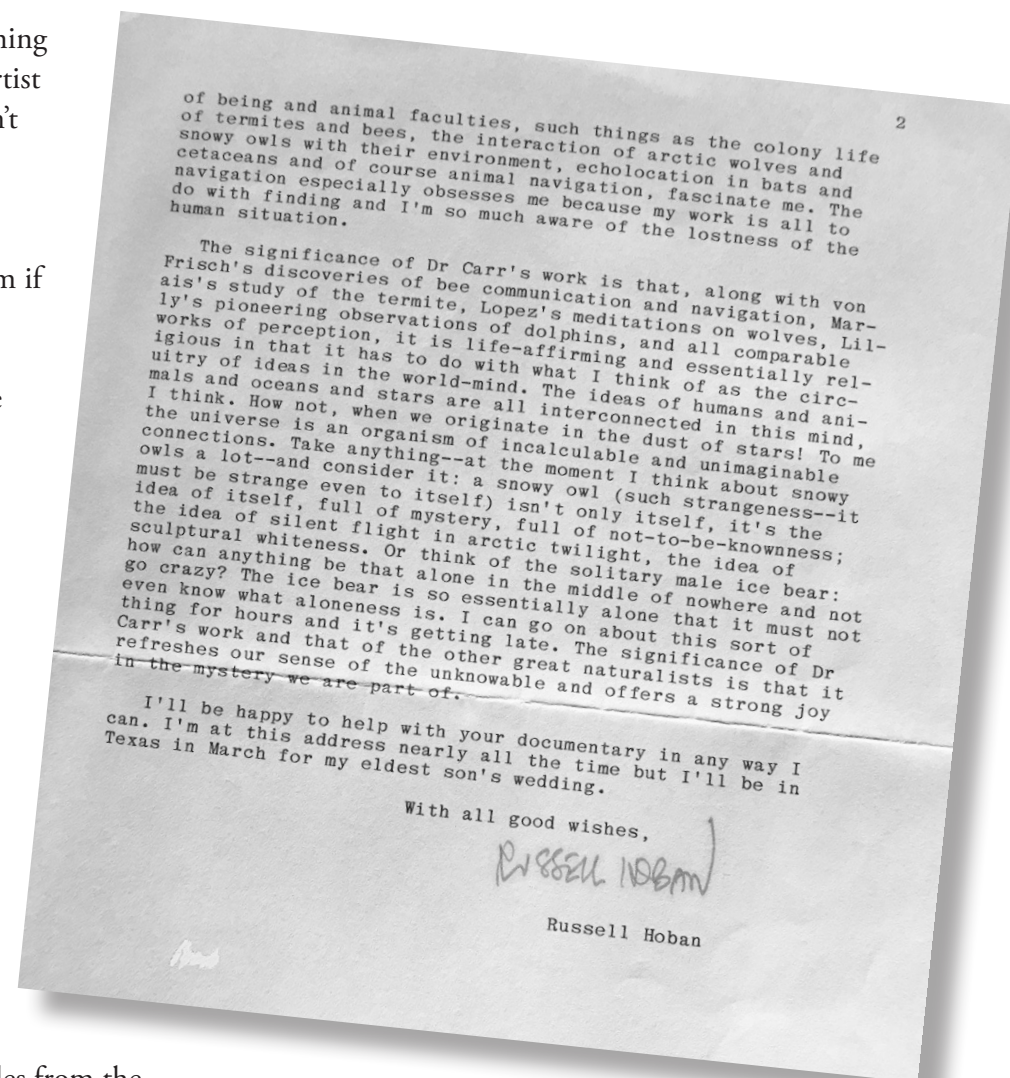
Hoban agreed to attend Santa Fe's fund-raising celebration and to introduce the recently released film adaptation of *Turtle Diary*. In his remarks, Hoban told the audience: "I believe there is one universal mind. I call it the world-mind because the word universe suggests remoteness and the world-mind has in it immeasurable distance but no remoteness. We inhabit the world-mind and it inhabits us." Later he would make reference to the "circuitry of the world-mind," a phrase that seems to me now to anticipate the development of the World Wide Web. Hoban constructed his circuitry the old-fashioned way, a walk to the aquarium, a turn of the page of *Scientific American*, a letter to Carr, connecting the dots along the way. We are grateful to be the beneficiary of Hoban's revelatory correspondence, a sample of which appears in the following page.

As was the case with his letters, Hoban's introduction to the Santa Fe screening of *Turtle Diary* was no perfunctory exercise but the careful deliberations of an artist willing to make his personal philosophical musings available to his readers. I can't recall how the audience responded upon listening to so erudite an appreciation of Carr's work. I do recall that when Russ descended the stairs from the stage he walked past me and the seat we had reserved for him and headed straight to the lobby. I found him there, stoop shouldered and seemingly depressed. I asked him if anything was wrong.

"I can't stand to watch the film again," he replied, in an anguished tone of voice.

"Can I ask why?" I replied. "The screenplay, did you notice who wrote the screenplay?" I hadn't, I confessed. "Harold 'Fucking' Pinter," he muttered in disdain. "He 'fucking' Pinterized my story!" My memory is hazy at this point. Did he say more, or I? I have reread *Turtle Diary* and viewed the film again before writing this chapter of the memoir. In his celebrated plays, such as "The Dumb Waiter" and "The Birthday Party," Pinter has created what has become known as the "Theater of Menace." I had previously taught "The Dumb Waiter" in my classes, and the atmosphere, the tense relationship between the central characters is, indeed, quite menacing and with more than a hint of both Antonin Artaud's "Theater of Cruelty" and Samuel Beckett's "absurdity" thrown in for good measure.

I found nothing quite that extreme in the novel, *Turtle Diary*, nor Pinter's screenplay for the film adaptation. Hoban provides situations Pinter could have exploited, "Pinterized," as Russ complained, such as heist of the turtles from the London Aquarium, of the enigmatic and depressed lady boarder who commits suicide. Perhaps Russ's reaction is typical of novelists who must offer up their literary creations to the big screen and hope for the best. This seemed to be confirmed by Russ's admission that shortly after the release of *Turtle Diary* he was offered a six-figure check for his next novel, *Riddley Walker*, which he impulsively rejected. He told me that when he finally came to his senses, the offer was off the table. I think there is a lesson here for writers lucky enough to see their novel optioned to the movie industry. Take the money and miss the screening.



For the possibility of a truly menacing experience, Russ would only have to wait to the following day when Bill Suchy and I had arranged to shoot our interview with the author at the Marineland Aquarium in St. Augustine. The choice seemed appropriately dripping in irony. Let's film an interview with a famous author whose work reveals an obsession with releasing sea turtles from captivity in an aquarium at, where else, an aquarium. Insensitively, I suppose, I never cleared this choice with Russ. When we arrived, Bill had to set up the camera and lights inside the aquarium, directly in front of a large window through which visitors could view the sea life parade by. At this point, I could tell Russ was a tad anxious about our choice of location, so I took him to ground level and we wandered over to a large pool where visitors could watch dolphins perform. We had entered the theater of menace. An attractive lady trainer was signaling the dolphins, which were wearing pointy party hats, their glistening dolphin bodies elevated, skimming along the surface. It was a Disney cartoon version of nature in a state famous for animatronically inspired theme parks.

Russ sat next to me, shriveled up and in a state of shock. I pried him from the bench and we walked back in silence to where Bill had set up the camera. I could see through the glass window and saw a scuba-diver wrestling a large sea turtle just out of camera range. I quickly positioned Russ with his back to the window and gave Bill an angry glare. He gave me a look intended to remind me that he had told me something to the effect that he knew the staff at the aquarium, who would assist us with the shoot. So this was the plan! As soon as Bill was ready, I began the interview. If Russ was in an agitated state, you would not know it if you watched the film. His answers were succinct and brilliant. You would never know that as he began talking about Carr, and the mysterious navigational skills of the sea turtles, I was watching the release of the struggling loggerhead, who swam by the window as if on cue. In fact, it was on cue as confirmed by Bill's smile as he watched all of this through the camera lens. Almost every time I screened the film to my classes, a student would comment on how amazing it was that the turtle swam through the shot with such perfect timing. In my "Media and Ethics" and nature and environmental classes, I discuss this shot in the context of what should be considered accepted practice in wildlife filmmaking. I never had the opportunity to nix the shot before we got it. There was no way I would lose Russ's eloquent comments. But I shudder every time I view the sequence, knowing that had Russ turned to glance over his shoulder and seen the diver wrestling a turtle that he would have wanted to liberate, the shoot would have been over.

We parted on good terms, and Russ told me he wanted to donate his speaking fee to the Carr film project. His gesture would soon be matched by Peter Matthiessen, following his reading for the Carr celebration. Peter Raven, the noted botanist and director of the Missouri Botanical Gardens, also donated his cash prize as winner of the 1987 Archie Carr Medal. We may have been stiffed by the deep-pocketed members of the Brotherhood of the Green Turtle, but the film project would move forward, underwritten by many modest donations and the filmmaker's willingness to forsake financial reward in return for the satisfaction of celebrating the life and words of Archie Carr.

Russell Hoban passed on December 13, 2011 at 86 years of age. His reputation as an innovator in the form of the novel, his bodacious experiments in the creation of new languages as in *Riddley Walker*, and his life-long exploration of the human experience, certifies his place as a major writer. Check out his official website and you will see what I mean. I think, like Carr, he may have felt that he, too, was an endangered species. Today's headlines suggest we all are. So I am cheered every time I read Russ's inscription in my copy of *Turtle Diary*: "Good swimming and no sharks."

Peter Matthiessen

Julie and I were waiting for Peter Matthiessen to join us for dinner at our log cabin, our first residence as a couple. A plaque on the door stated the cabin had been built in the 1940s, and a relative of the original owners told us it was constructed from trees felled on site. A forester confirmed that there were at least six species of tree from roof to floor. It seemed the perfect spot to host one of the most traveled living naturalists and explorers. I had offered to pick Peter up at the Holiday Inn, some three miles away, but he politely refused, saying he would prefer to walk. As I waited for Peter to appear at the end of our lane, it must have occurred to me that our guest had probably walked more miles in the most remote corners of the planet than any other person I had ever met.

In his book, *The Cloud Forest*, I had followed Peter on his 20,000-mile trek across the South American wilderness from the Amazon rainforest to Tierra del Fuego. In *Under the Mountain Wall*, I experienced vicariously the dangers of encountering the Kurelu, a stone age tribe living in the Baliem Valley of Central New Guinea. In *Blue Meridian: The Search for the Great White Shark*, I dove with threatening sharks as Peter joined a documentary team in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, and off the Australian Coast. And at a time when I was beginning my transition from Catholicism to a Buddhist-inspired life, I took a spiritual journey, along with countless Matthiessen readers, in *The Snow Leopard*. In this National Book Award-winning memoir, Matthiessen joins the noted field biologist George Schaller for a physically and emotionally challenging climb in the Himalayas in search of the elusive snow leopard. For Matthiessen, the journey is an opportunity to process the recent death of his wife, Deborah Love, and to visit the Crystal Monastery and its Buddhist lama.



Peter Matthiessen..

My documentary work had already provided me the privileged opportunity to spend time with noted writers and artists. But there was something more personal and intimidating about meeting Matthiessen. I had carefully composed my first letter to Peter to reflect what for me was more than an academic interest in his work and relationship to Archie Carr. In my September 3, 1987 query letter, I wrote the following: “In *Nine Headed Dragon River* you note that ‘the longing that starts one on the way of Zen is a kind of home sickness.’” This line has stayed with me as I’ve reviewed Carr’s writings, particularly his concentration and curiosity regarding the ‘homing instinct’ of sea turtles. In *The Sea Turtle: So Excellent a Fishe*, Carr reveals his sensitivity to the nuances of language when he learns that the Castilian word for arribada, the great mass landings of sea turtles, is “morrina,” meaning “melancholy or homesickness.”

Perhaps as if to emphasize the point, or to impress Matthiessen I had done my research, I continued: “Similarly, throughout Carr’s writings on Africa (*Ulendo*), Honduras (*High Jungles and Low*), Costa Rica and throughout Florida, the same sense of longing, of being at home in the natural world, suggests itself again and again. I believe this impulse has much to do with Carr’s conservation ethic, and accounts for the strong response he received from his readers. I also believe you might be uniquely able, among nature writers, to comment on this and other aspects of Carr’s work.”

Peter must have been sufficiently impressed with my request to participate in the Carr film, because here he was making his long-legged stride towards the cabin. Dressed in khakis, a blue denim shirt, and safari-type vest, he extended his hand and greeted us with his gravelly, mellifluous voice. It took only one glance at Julie to see she was smitten. She would stay smitten during the coming years, when Peter would return to appear in two more of my films and be our honored house guest. I told Julie she had my permission to continue her two mad crushes on Peter and Bruce Springsteen. If successfully executed, she would take cuckolding to the highest level.

I'm guessing over time Julie knew I had formed a bromance of my own, one I'd like to think was both spiritual and intellectual in nature. Peter made this easy and inevitable from that very first dinner. Looking back on our conversation, I can now appreciate the fact that Peter was in the crux of at least three significant professional dilemmas. He had been spending time in Lake City, north of Gainesville, trying to track down descendants of Edgar Watson, the Florida sugar cane planter and alleged outlaw who was killed by a posse of his neighbors in the remote Ten Thousand Islands region of Southwest Florida. Peter had already completed *Killing Mr. Watson*, the first book of a planned trilogy, and was now trying to track down Watson kinfolk who had headed north to escape Watson's dark shadow. Watson's fictional son, Lucius, would be central to the next volume in the trilogy, *Lost Man's River*. Lucius, an alcoholic historian, would experience considerable resistance and slammed doors in his attempt to uncover his father's backstory. And, as Peter explained to us at dinner, this was precisely the reception he was getting in Lake City trying to research the novel.

In addition, the courts were about to rule on a landmark libel case brought against the publication of Matthiessen's controversial nonfiction account of the FBI's war on the American Indian Movement and the alleged 1977 murder of an FBI agent by American indigenous rights activist, Leonard Peltier. Copies of *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* were sitting in warehouses until the court decided on a libel suit against the author. I recall that Peter was irate that Peltier had been convicted and imprisoned for charges, as claimed in his book, that were "fabricated." He was unsure how the verdict would go and said that, should he lose, he might face financial ruin.

And if that were not enough to be concerned about, and for Peter to frankly share at our first meeting, following our shoot he told us he would be heading to Miami to join filmmaker Hector Bibanco, who was having trouble with the script adaptation of Matthiessen's novel, *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*. Bibanco, fresh off his 1985, well-received *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, had co-written the screenplay for Matthiessen's novel with Jean-Claude Carriere, and there were still perceived problems, which they hoped the novel's author could help solve. According to film critic Roger Ebert it never was solved because, in his estimation the film's producer, Saul Zaentz, had a history of producing "unfilmable" source material. Nonetheless, director James Cameron was sufficiently impressed with Bibanco's film that he used it as source material for his film *Avatar*. Looking back, I find it curious that both Hoban and Matthiessen, who agreed to speak in praise of Carr in our film, had experienced some difficulty in translating their novels to the screen.

We talked late into the night, and I need to underscore the fact that Peter showed considerable interest in us and our lives. His network of friends and associations ranged from Hollywood stars to the Dali Lama. But he was fully present in the moment, attuned to what you had to say, and totally unassuming. We decided to film Peter's interview in the cabin's living room and at the Persimmon Point overlook at Paynes Prairie. We reviewed the excerpts from *Far Tortuga* that he would read to the Santa Fe College audience. Before walking back to the hotel, Peter inscribed my copy of *The Snow Leopard* with a Buddhist blessing,

“Namaste” (I bow to you). He strode silently into the night, and in my heart I bowed in his direction.

The interview at the cabin was to be shot by Fred Leutner, our assistant cameraman, using his Gizmo 16mm film camera. For some reason, Fred had forgotten to pack his “blimp,” or sound-deadening cover. While post-production magic eliminated some of the camera’s motor noise, this was an early and important reminder that bad sound is often the bane of low-budget indie filmmaking. The interview at Persimmon Point had the sort of grandeur befitting comments about Carr’s Florida writings. Looking down onto the great expanse of Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, Florida’s largest open savannah, Peter likened the scene, the dew shimmering in the morning light, to his own visit to Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania. He recalled Carr’s sharply rendered observations in *Ulendo*, and offered that while Carr seldom waxed nostalgic about the diminishment of the natural world, it was hard not to lament the loss of the large animals that once roamed the very place we were now standing.

Peter’s Santa Fe reading from *Far Tortuga* was electrifying. The novel recounts the tragic circumstances of a sea turtle expedition off Nicaragua. The prose style evokes the Caribbean dialect in lines such as: “Dat mornin de sea is covered with baby turtle and de sky is black with birds, just *black* with mon-o’-war birds, swoopin down. Dey is very few dat gets away. Oh, *very* few!” Occasionally the language reverts to haiku-like precision in its depiction of the natural world. Peter inhabited the characters who spoke through him and the audience was mesmerized. All of this was captured on film and then the footage was lost. I keep hoping one day my production partner will call me with news he found the lost film canisters, but I am not holding out much chance. I recently reread the novel and found Peter’s notes and the outline for my introduction tucked inside. I hear Peter’s voice on every page and hear echoes of Carr’s *Windward Road*. Further validation, I believe, of Hoban’s concept of the “circuitry of the world mind.”

Bob Graham

When I arrived at UF’s Bob Graham Center, the Senator’s secretary apologized that he was running late, making last-minute changes to comments we were about to videotape at the Santa Fe College TV studio. He had kindly offered to present FDE’s “Marjorie Harris Carr Award for Environmental Advocacy” to the late Nathaniel Reed, a legendary champion of the Florida Everglades and the Ocklawaha River. Reed passed away from a tragic fall while fly-fishing in Canada, and we were to present the award posthumously to his family. I suspected something might be amiss when Bob called to tell me he had an important family obligation and asked if we could tape his comments. My worries only grew when his secretary peered into the Senator’s office and looked back at me with a sad expression. On the ride over to the college, it became clear why she was concerned.

I first met Graham when I was filming my Suwannee documentary in 1981. It was Governor Graham then, and some 40 years later we were on a first-name basis.



Florida Senator Bob Graham.

“Steve, can I read this to you and see what you think?”

“Sure, Bob, have at it.”

It was rough going. There were too many pauses and fumbled phrasings. Maybe he would pull it together once the camera was on. The studio director and his student crew were beaming as he shook their hands. As was his custom, he asked each of them their names and told them how appreciative he was for their assistance. They knew they were in the company of someone special.

I felt the same way the day we first met. It was one year following the initial broadcast of *Seven Ways to Kill the Suwannee*. The documentary had been rebroadcast on Tallahassee public television, and Governor Graham was seeing it for the first time. It must have been the closing segment of the film, titled “Silence the Prophets,” when Bill Hinkley of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection responded to my request to look into a crystal ball and tell me what the Suwannee River might look like in 50 years. Bill somehow stepped out of his bureaucratic posture, looked directly into the camera and said that not even the newly passed floodplain ordinance could save the Suwannee if major loopholes in existing regulations weren’t addressed. “In 50 years,” he predicted, “the Suwannee could have many of the same problems that plague the St. Johns River.”

Governor Graham picked up the phone and called Bill. I would have loved to have seen the expression on Bill’s face when he recognized the voice of the caller. Bill defended his gloomy comments, Graham took it all in, and then he instructed Bill to fix the loopholes and come forward with regulations that might actually protect the river. Bill then called my consultant on the film, environmental attorney Richard Hamann, and together they began work on improving the ordinance. This was one of those rare and spectacular moments when investigative and advocacy documentary work comes full circle and contributes to the solving of a problem.

After *Seven Ways* was aired, we received some very angry reactions from the people of White Springs for our segment on the phosphate plant and its various violations. They felt that the film could jeopardize the future of the plant and their jobs. In print journalism, angry readers can write a letter to the editor. This convention didn’t really exist for regional broadcast journalism. I hail from New England and the tradition of the Town Hall, where the public can gather to air their concerns and grievances. I applied for and received a grant from the Florida Humanities Council to hold two town hall meetings, one in White Springs, the other in the town of Suwannee. These taped sessions allowed the public to raise their concerns about the river and our film. We aired the program as a sequel to the original Suwannee film. One of the audience members, responding to the “Silence the Prophets” segment, suggested we take on the question of what the river might look like in 50 years as the subject of a sequel to *Seven Ways*.

I applied for another grant to support a one-day, UF College of Law sponsored- conference titled, “The Future of the Suwannee,” to which we invited a broad range of stakeholders: Suwannee River dwellers, business owners, fishermen, the fishing writer for the *Gainesville Sun*, folk singer Dale Crider to sing his Suwannee ballad, scientists, environmentalists, and Governor Graham. Turned out Graham’s schedule would not allow him to attend, so I set a date to tape his comments at his Tallahassee office. Helen Hood, head of FDE’s Suwannee River Coalition, offered her car, and I offered to drive. We were running late, and I lead-footed it